

SCC PUBLIC WITNESS TIPS

When conducting a hearing, the State Corporation Commission (SCC) functions in a manner similar to a court of law following applicable laws and its own rules of practice and procedure. However, citizens should not be discouraged from participating in an SCC case. Anyone is welcome to attend Commission hearings in Richmond or in other localities and is encouraged to testify.

- Although the venue for a local hearing may be a high school gymnasium or a city council chambers, it is considered the Commission's courtroom. As such, only the news media is allowed to photograph or record the hearing.
- There can be no signs, posters, or demonstrations. The audience will be instructed by the Commission or a Hearing Examiner to refrain from applause, boos, catcalls, or laughter.
- Witnesses are encouraged to arrive at least 15-minutes early to sign up. Late arrivals will continue to be registered.
- If attending a hearing in one of the SCC's downtown Richmond courtrooms, you may be subjected to pre-screening security procedures.
- Every attempt will be made to call witnesses in the order that they sign up. However, circumstances may cause the order to shuffle, so be prepared to stay as long as it takes.
- If you have prepared testimony as a participant in the case, you will not be allowed to speak as a public witness.
- When you approach the witness stand microphone, you will be sworn in by the SCC bailiff avowing that your comments are truthful.
- A written copy of any prepared comments is not required, but certainly helpful if such can be left with the bailiff. This includes any supplemental material you wish to submit for the Commission's consideration.
- You will be asked to state your full name, address, and whether you represent yourself or a group.
- Be thoughtful of your neighbors. The Commission typically sets no time limit on witnesses, but comments should be concise, on point, and not repetitive. Everyone in the room has taken time away from their important schedules to attend the hearing. Be considerate of their time.
- At the conclusion of a person's comments, the Commissioners, a Hearing Examiner or an attorney representing the applicant, SCC staff, or other case participants may ask clarifying questions. Public witnesses may not ask questions. SCC staff will be available at the hearing to address individual questions.
- All comments from public witnesses are transcribed by the court reporter. The transcript is made part of the case record.

After a local hearing, the evidentiary phase of the case continues in Richmond. Hearings in Richmond are held in the Commission's second floor courtroom located at 1300 East Main Street. Public witnesses may be heard on a specifically scheduled date or at the very beginning of the evidentiary hearing.

It will be several months before the Hearing Examiner's report is issued. That report serves as a recommendation to the Commission. Although that report allows a 21-day comment period, the comment window is open only to the formal case participants, not public witnesses.